

never give up our ability to act unilaterally in the world if we must move into a region to bring stability.

This amendment ties the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. We should never, ever do that. The President has spoken prudently, talking about bilateral action, meaning bringing other nations with us. Those who have been speaking here for the last hour in support of this amendment have been talking as if the United States is somehow wanting to unilaterally march off to war. They use the phrase "give peace a chance."

Mr. Speaker, we are the peaceful Nation. We want to work cooperatively with other nations around the world, and that is what the President is going to do. So when my colleagues say "give peace a chance," it has been 10 years. We have these 16 U.N. resolutions. Let us go back into this regime of the United Nations and weapons inspections. When we look at that, the U.N. was and is hesitant to back up the violations of these 16 U.N. resolutions. Their response has been tepid.

Also, I would ask my colleagues to look with regard to how the inspectors were undermined, as Iraq would appeal directly to the sympathetic Council members and to the Secretary General. Iraq worked consistently to erode the credibility and the positions of these U.N. inspectors over the last 10 years. They would complain to the Security Council, and then the challenges of the claims of the weapons inspectors would suffice. Unfettered access was strictly a myth. Respect for Iraqi concerns relating to national security, sovereignty and dignity took precedence over the findings and destroying of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction programs. Effectively, the actions of the Secretary General, when he intervened, made the Iraqis and the inspectors equal in presenting their case before the Security Council.

With regard to Saddam Hussein's motive for having weapons of mass destruction, he believes that they are vital to his power. The regime has two experiences in which it feels its very survival is linked to the possession of weapons of mass destruction. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz pointed out that hitting cities deep in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war with long-range missiles and countering human wave attacks with the massive use of chemical munitions saved Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. Moreover, Baghdad believes that its possession of biological and chemical weapons during the 1991 Gulf War helped deter the United States from marching on to Baghdad.

Now, that is their dimension. That is their understanding. So Saddam will do everything he possibly can to maintain a stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. So this thing about give peace a chance, well, we have given peace a chance. The President has also used words of saying that military force will be the means of last resort.

So I think the President has been very clear. We will show the United

States has the resolve and power to stand up against Iraq, seek their compliance, force their word in their violations of the cease-fire; but if they do not, then the world will act and disarm Saddam Hussein and change the regime, if necessary, to bring peace and stability to the Middle East as a region.

We should vote down the Lee amendment and support the sovereignty and national dignity of this country.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support today of the Lee substitute, which I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of. I wholeheartedly support the principles of this substitute, and believe they contain a much more humane answer to the grave issue of Iraq.

Like Congresswoman BARBARA LEE I urge the United States to re-engage in the diplomatic process of diplomacy. I also would like to urge our country to remain committed to the UN inspector process. I am also in complete agreement with the Lee substitute's premise that there will likely be horrific consequences of our actions if the United States delivers a first strike against Iraq, particularly without the support of the United Nations.

Like Congresswoman LEE and many of my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus, I stand in strong opposition to a unilateral first strike by the U.S. without a clearly demonstrated and imminent threat of attack on the United States. I would also like to emphasize that I categorically believe that we must not declare war until every diplomatic option is completely exhausted. The Bush Resolution authorizes the potential use of force immediately, long before diplomatic options have been exhausted or even fully explored. Furthermore, a unilateral first-strike would undermine the moral authority of the United States, result in substantial loss of life, destabilize the Mideast region and undermine the ability of our nation to address unmet domestic priorities.

The President is asking Congress to give him a blank check. And I say today Mr. President, that your account, has come back overdrawn. This blank check gives him too much power. A blank check that forces Congress to waive its constitutional duty to declare war. A blank check that lets the President declare war, and not consult Congress until 48 hours after the attack has begun.

Not only has the President economically taken us to deficit, but there is deficit in his arguments. Why Iraq, and why today??

You know, in my 10 years of serving in Congress, this is the most serious vote I've taken. And I have to say, the Resolution on Iraq the White House drafted is intentionally misleading. It misleads the American public, the international community, and yes, even the United States Congress.

This is a sad day. Almost as sad as it was 627 days ago when the Supreme Court selected George W. Bush as the President. You know, the White House talks about dictators, but we haven't done anything to correct what has happened right here in the United States. It amazes me that we question other governments, when in our own country, we did not have a fair election.

I recently traveled to Russia, China, and South Korea, and believe it would be most unfortunate to damage the good will our nation

was receiving after September 11th because of the Bush Administration's reckless actions. We are on our own; NO ONE in the international community is behind us.

I have not seen any new information demonstrating that Iraq poses a threat to our country any more now than it did ten years ago, and certainly am without reason to believe we should attack unilaterally, without the support of the U.N.

In fact, recent poll numbers released suggest that many Americans do not support the way the President is handling the situation with Iraq either. Indeed, polls indicate what I imagined all along; namely, that a majority of Americans believe President Bush and Congress are spending too much time discussing Iraq, while neglecting domestic problems like health care and education. Many also said that they did not want the United States to act without support from allies and by a two to one margin, did not want the U.S. to act before U.N. weapons inspectors had an opportunity to enter Iraq and conduct further investigations.

Although the Administration is attempting to convince the American public otherwise, they have shown me little evidence of a connection between Iraq and 9-11. And little evidence that Iraq poses an immediate threat to our country.

Iraq's government is not democratic, but neither are many other countries listed on the State Department's terrorist list: like Iran, Syria, Libya, North Korea, Cuba, and Sudan.

I reiterate my opposition to this Resolution, and to this war.

To my colleagues, it is in your hands. I do believe the world has good and evil, and what you are about to do here today, will tilt it in a negative direction. It will set us on a course, and I hope I'm wrong, but it could set us on a course, that our children's children, will pay for. That the entire world will pay for. And that will put thousands of American soldiers in harm's way.

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Lee amendment.

I am particularly supportive of this amendment because it would place the emphasis where it ought to be—which is in multinational diplomacy and within the context of a strong commitment to the U.N. inspection process—in this important campaign to disarm Iraq and protect our allies national security.

Questions have been raised about our ability to do unfettered and complete inspections, and whether or not we were able to find anything that Sadaam Hussein did not want us to find the first time around.

Mr. Speaker, I would say, that if we have not learned from past experience with Iraq, and if we do not have the technology to search out, find and destroy biological or chemical weapons, or weapons of mass destruction, then we are also not prepared to go to war with Iraq.

Many of us have spoken over the past week about the dangerous precedent that would be set by the United States employing a unilateral first strike against Iraq. The other grave concern of many which was supported by the recently released CIA report, is that whatever weapons Sadaam had would be deployed in desperate retaliation bringing unimaginable death and destruction to us and our allies.